
PSYOP is a Nasty Term—Too Bad, Redux

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Editorial Abstract: *The authors review the Air Force's historic Psychological Operations posture, describe a current limited capability, and explore a number of significant shortfalls limiting the USAF's ability to carry out assigned Joint missions. They recommend organizational constructs to fully utilize existing Air Force competencies, and to develop fully capable influence operators as an integral part of the Joint PSYOP community.*

In 1977 then Major, later Colonel, Fred W. Walker, USAF, penned an article entitled *PSYOP is a Nasty Term—Too Bad*. Walker begins his essay, stating:

"We are missing a bet by neglecting the field of psychological operations, commonly known as PSYOP... Too often, psychological aspects of operations are...completely neglected."

He concludes:

"While the need to enhance Air Force PSYOP is very real, unlike other pressing needs, to do so is not costly... For a small investment, potential rewards are great with this force magnifier."

Today, over 30 years later, the Air Force is still neglectful of PSYOP. Even with all of the recent emphasis on transformation, "influence operations," strategic communication, and countering adversary propaganda, PSYOP in the Air Force is still a "nasty term." Further, Colonel Walker's conclusion is equally cogent now as it was three decades ago.

This article discusses the Air Force's historic, and often times reluctant, PSYOP role, then examines Service responsibilities within Joint PSYOP. We will revisit the capabilities the Air Force brings to the Joint PSYOP fight, then discuss current USAF shortfalls in meeting joint PSYOP responsibilities. Finally, it will present one (but not the *only*) solution to eliminate these capability gaps.

This Has No Place in Combat

The Air Force has a rich heritage in Psychological Operations, though the USAF leadership's assumption and execution of PSYOP missions through the years—while successful—has often been reluctant. Even so, Air Force flying units and other organizations have engaged in the dissemination of PSYOP messages, conducted operations

to achieve specific psychological impact, or engaged in other planning and support functions related to PSYOP from the First World War to the present day.

When World War I began, the German's and the Allied nations of France and Britain began using balloons to deliver propaganda leaflets across the lines. The Germans conducted the first leaflet dropping operation using an airplane on 30 August 1914, when a Lt Ernst Von Hiddessen, flying a "Taube" type aircraft, dropped leaflet bundles and small "bombs" on Paris.

American participation in World War I military "propaganda" efforts began with the arrival of Captain Heber Blankenhorn and eight other junior officers on 25 July 1918 at American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) General Headquarters. These officers were to form the propaganda section of the GHQ AEF, reporting to Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. "They were sent forthwith to study propaganda methods of the Allies." However these efforts were "cut short in August by orders to begin propaganda operations at once."

Captain Blankenhorn and his team of "propagandists" developed leaflets "to make the German's surrender..." and "...destroy their fighting spirit." However, "delivering these leaflets proved no easy task... when Blankenhorn requested an air drop... Brigadier General William Mitchell, replied that 'This has no place in combat operations.'" Although initially reluctant, General Mitchell (and other Air Service subordinate commanders) later relented, and the Air Service successfully delivered more than three million of the over five million leaflets Captain Blankenhorn's propaganda section produced.

After World War I the US Army dismantled its PSYOP apparatus, not to be revived again until the United States

entered World War II. Unfortunately, Billy Mitchell's initial reaction regarding aerial delivery of propaganda, or Psychological Warfare leaflets (as they were known by this time), still seems to have held with some US and Allied Airmen.

Leo J. Margolin, describing nascent US psychological warfare efforts in North Africa in the fall of 1942, noted "Of course there was much initial opposition from the Air Corps. Pilots didn't see why they should risk their lives to drop pieces of paper rather than explosives."

Many Allied airmen in senior positions seemed to hold this attitude. No less a critic was then Air Vice Marshall (later Marshall of the Royal Air Force) Sir Arthur T. "Bomber" Harris, who commanded the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command at the time. Harris stated in response to a request for more leaflet operations: "Can something please now be done to curb and keep within bounds these uncorrelated and enthusiastic attempts to shower rubbish all over the world at the expense of the bomber effort?" No less a critic of these "paper bullets" was Major General Elwood "Pete" Quesada, commander of the U.S. IXth Tactical Air Command. He apparently, "was scornful of psychological warfare and did everything within his power to instill in his staff an attitude of non-cooperation."

Yet not all Allied Airmen adopted Quesada's and Harris' attitudes, certainly not then Major General Ira C. Eaker, the Eighth Air Force commander. It was on 28 May 1943 that General Eaker sent a message to VIII Bomber Command requesting they initiate leaflet dropping operations as soon as possible. This order would eventually result in the 422d Bomb Squadron (Heavy) (later 406th

Night Leaflet Squadron) specializing in nighttime leaflet dropping missions. This unit would eventually drop over 2 billion leaflets between June 1944 and May 1945. General Eaker also institutionalized leaflets sorties over Germany by directing that the last three bombers of every group flying from England carry leaflets on every mission over Germany.

In addition to 8th Air Force leaflet operations, the 15th Air Force also carried out many successful leaflet operations in the Balkans and Northern Italy, during the Italian Campaign. Allied propaganda efforts in the European theater were generally viewed as successful, and leaflet operations by Army Air Force aircraft continued in all theater of operations worldwide. In the southwest Pacific, for example, the 6th Army Psychological Warfare Branch assigned liaison officers to the 5th Air Force to coordinate leaflet operations. Also, the XXI Bomber Command conducted extensive leaflet operations during the bombing operations over the home islands of Japan in 1945. Regardless of the negative view points of some senior leaders at the time, the contribution of Air Force aircraft, flight crews and ground crews directly contributed to the successes of US and Allied psychological warfare efforts during World War II.

At the outbreak of the Korean War the Air Force only had one officer in the Far East Air Force who had any PSYOP experience at all. Much of what had been learned during World War II in regard to aerial leaflet operations had to be painfully relearned during the Korean War. In 1951, the Air Force did establish the Air Resupply and Communication Service, with PSYOP as its primary mission. Even though assigned to Military Air Transport Service at the time, its wings were actually operational arms of the Psychological Warfare Division, Directorate of Plans, HQ Air Force—and charged with planning Air Force Psychological Warfare, Conventional Warfare and Special Operations. However, standing up the ARCS was

not so much to support PSYOP in Korea, as it was to scratch the itch of the fledgling CIA who needed air support for agent operations. Elements of the ARCS did participate in PSYOP in Korea, with 581st Air Resupply and Communication Wing crews rotating into the theater from Clark Air Base, Philippines, to fly leaflet missions. Additionally the 581st ARCW's Reproduction Squadron would produce leaflets for operations in Korean. However regular bomb and troop carrier squadrons conducted the vast majority of leaflet missions. Also during the Korean War, the Air Force began supporting psychological warfare through the carrying of loudspeakers on board select aircraft, broadcasting messages to the North Korean and Chinese soldiers at the front.



“... the 193rd SOW remains the Air Force’s only dedicated PSYOP capability.”
(Air Force Link)

However, just as quickly as the Air Force was back in the PSYOP business, it was out again. By the 1953 Korean Armistice, the Air Force began deactivation of all three ARCS wings. Air Force psywarriors would not reappear again until the early 1960s.

The Air Force would expand its PSYOP role during Vietnam creating two Special Operations Squadrons (the 5th and the 9th) with a dedicated PSYOP mission. By 1977, both squadrons of these Air Force psywarriors would also disappear, leaving only the Joint Psychological Operations Course at the US Air Force Special Operations School and the 193d Special Operations Wing (Volant Solo) as remnants. Though assigned a PSYOP broadcast mission, the

wing was relegated to the Air National Guard. Indeed throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the 193d SOW would be the only dedicated Air Force PSYOP capability.

However, with the advent of Information Operations doctrine in the mid-1990s, the Air Force recognized PSYOP as a core capability of Information Operations. Therefore, upon receiving certain IO responsibilities in 1998, the Air Intelligence Agency (AIA) [now Air Force ISR Agency] established a Psychological Operations Division. This organization would be instrumental in ensuring at least one trained PSYOP planner was assigned to every Information Warfare Flight then assigned to every Numbered Air Force and Air Operations Center (AOC), as well as bringing the new PDU-5/B leaflet bomb into the inventory, to replace the aging M129E1/E2. The PSYOP division also played a small role supporting Joint efforts in Korea, Kosovo, and the Global War on Terror, following 9/11. However, changes to Air Force IO doctrine and AOC organizational structure saw further shifts. PSYOP was doctrinally lumped in with the other “influence disciplines” of Operations Security (OPSEC), Military Deception (MILDEC) as well as Counter-Intelligence and Public Affairs. HQ AIA’s PSYOP Division was disbanded in 2005, and Information Warfare Flights became “Information Operations Teams” matrixed into every AOC. As of this writing, with the exception of a handful of planners, the 193rd SOW remains the Air Force’s only dedicated PSYOP capability. USAF interest in PSYOP waxes and wanes with the years, as Colonel Walker observes: “The Air Force seems to cycle through interest and disinterest in PSYOP, like a historical roller coaster.”

Yet the Air Force is still very active in its traditional role of PSYOP dissemination of leaflets, and even in non-traditional uses of airpower to achieve “influence” through the inherent psychological effects. Leaflet dissemination operations using Air

Mobility Command aircraft and “shows of force” using fighter and bomber aircraft are routinely reported in airpower summaries released on the Air Force homepage. With the establishment of Air Force Cyber Command, the USAF is interested in integrating influence operations within the command, and ensuring influence operations are conducted in the cyber domain. It is possible that Air Force interest in Joint PSYOP may wax anew through its cyber warfare efforts. If so, the Air Force still has to correct some shortfalls to ensure that PSYOP (or influence operations) are conducted effectively within the cyber warfighting domain, particularly to ensure effective integration into Joint PSYOP to achieve synchronous and synergistic effects. Before we examine those shortfalls, it is useful to briefly outline the Service responsibilities to Joint PSYOP, and what the Air Force brings to this fight.

What the Air Force Brings to the Joint PSYOP Fight

According to Joint Publication 3-53, *Joint Doctrine For Psychological Operations*,

“The Military Departments and Services will:

- (1) Provide civilian and military personnel with appropriate PSYOP training and planning skills.
- (2) Provide capabilities organic to Service forces to execute PSYOP actions and dedicated PSYOP forces and equipment.
- (3) Develop Service PSYOP doctrine relating to the primary functions assigned to the particular Service.
- (4) Provide PSYOP forces or detachments (not assigned to the Commander, USSOCOM) to combatant commanders for service in foreign countries.
- (5) Provide departmental intelligence and counterintelligence assets that are trained, equipped, and organized to support planning and conduct PSYOP.
- (6) Incorporate PSYOP instruction into Service training and education programs.”

To meet these responsibilities, the Air Force brings much to the PSYOP

table. Col Walker’s article outlines Air Force PSYOP Capabilities, quoting from Air Force Special Operations doctrine of the time:

“All aerospace forces have essential capabilities to produce psychological effects as a result of characteristics such as range, mobility, responsiveness, and over-all tactical versatility.” These capabilities are clearly spelled out:

- (1) Show of force, which can vary from a specific planned mission and deployment, to simple publication of the fact that a friendly force is in the area.
- (2) Attack on a selected target to demonstrate the futility of further resistance.
- (3) Harassing actions to limit enemy effectiveness, such as night attacks to interrupt rest, sonic booms to terrorize.
- (4) Exploiting aerospace force maneuverability and mobility to demonstrate military superiority.



Airmen load a “leaflet bomb.” USAF PSYOP in Korea (*Air Force Link*)

- (5) Leaflet and loudspeaker missions to inform or convince target audiences.
- (6) Humanitarian operations and support for US or indigenous civic actions.
- (7) Monitoring, evaluating, and analyzing the effects of operations.”

These have not changed much over the past 30 years, and the Air Force still recognizes these capabilities within AF Doctrine Document 2-5, *Information Operations*, stating “Air Force assets have the inherent ability to create psychological effects.” Indeed this inherent ability to create psychological effects has been a recognized PSYOP support capability since the day Lt Von Hiddessen, dropped leaflet bundles and small bombs on Paris in 1914.

The Army recognizes the inherent psychological effects of airpower and the psychological impact of all kinetic military operations. Army Field Manual 3-05.30, *Psychological Operations*, discusses and defines psychological operations actions or PSYACTs as:

“An action conducted by non-PSYOP personnel, that is planned primarily to affect the behavior of a TA [Target Audience].”

It is in this supporting PSYOP role, especially during major combat operations, that the Air Force is most adept. Further, every airpower theorist from Douhet to [Lt Gen David] Deptula have acknowledged the inherent psychological effects of airpower, especially in regard to Strategic Bombardment. As an older version of Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1.2, *Strategic Attack* stated:

“It is the synergistic effect of the psychological element [of airpower], along with the destruction or disruption of resources, infrastructure, and enemy military capabilities... that can work together to give the psychological factor a role in achieving overall campaign goals.”

These are the traditional, or legacy, roles that the Air Force has always brought (even if sometimes reluctantly) to the Joint PSYOP fight. With the advent of Information Operations and the Air Force’s efforts in “cyber warfare”, however, the Air Force also adds new dissemination and other “non-kinetic” capabilities to its legacy roles. Yet, the Air Force also brings the following areas to the PSYOP table both in experience and capabilities:

- Targeting
- Intelligence
- Planning
- Behavioral Science

It is through effective targeting, planning, and collection and use of all-source intelligence, that air and space power can be used as a service-specific capability to play crucial PSYOP roles. Further, the Air Force is the only service with a Behavioral Science Career Field (Air Force Specialty Code 61SB) that are commissioned line—not medical—officers. These individuals bring a unique

background in understanding adversary and group behavior, dynamics and psychology. They are uniquely qualified to assist Army PSYOP professionals in conducting Target Audience Analysis and product development. Couple these USAF behavioral professionals with Air Force Foreign Area Officers, targeteers, linguists, and operational planners; train all of these individuals in PSYOP, and you then provide a cadre of PSYOP planners. The US Army and Joint PSYOP communities can then tap into this significant capability.

Shortfalls

Currently, the US Air Force has a mere handful of officers and NCOs (mostly in the intelligence AFSCs with an Information Operations Special Experience prefix) with sufficient PSYOP training to be of added value to either the Army or Joint PSYOP communities. The Air Force recently implemented a program to train ten behavioral scientists per year in PSYOP, then assign them to Information Operations Detachments at every Air and Space Operations Center, plus one at US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Joint PSYOP Support Element. However, ten individuals are still not enough to call a capability—at best this is a “band-aid” fix.

Interestingly, this USAF PSYOP planner shortfall is noted in a study authored by Dr. Christopher J. Lamb and published by the National Defense University. The *Review of Psychological Operations Lessons Learned from Recent Operational Experience* states:

A widely recognized problem in OIF was the insufficient number of PSYOP planners available to support component commanders. It was asserted that the lack of PSYOP planners contributed to poor planning and execution of PSYOP missions. Specifically, the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) and the Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander had insufficient PSYOP planning support within their respective commands. PSYOP integration in mission planning was hampered by this shortfall.

Providing the 193rd Special Operations Wing (Commando Solo) as a dedicated PSYOP force to USSOCOM might be construed as meeting the Service responsibility to “Provide capabilities organic to Service forces to execute PSYOP actions and dedicated PSYOP forces and equipment.” However, neither including PSYOP as part of a two week block of influence operations instruction (during Air Force IO specialist training), nor training just ten officers a year in PSYOP, can hardly be construed as fulfilling Service responsibilities. These actions fall short of providing “civilian and military personnel with appropriate PSYOP training and planning skills” or to “Provide PSYOP forces or detachments... to combatant commanders for service in foreign countries.” This shortfall may be why routinely conducted airpower shows of force in Iraq are not often synchronized or synergized with Joint PSYOP efforts in theater.

In addition, the Air Force has fallen short on its responsibility to “Provide departmental intelligence and counterintelligence assets that are trained, equipped, and organized to support planning and conduct PSYOP.” The USAF has attempted to correct this by establishing a small Behavioral Influence Analysis capability at the National Air Intelligence and Space Center, and the nascent Behavioral Influence Analysis Center at Air University. These efforts have provided valuable operational-level, all-source intelligence analysis and assessments to various warfighters regarding adversary intentions as well as identifying critical behavioral and psychological susceptibilities and vulnerabilities. However, the footprint of these dedicated analysts and academicians remains extremely small, and woefully under-funded.

It is also interesting to note the US Air Force has Information Operations Squadrons with dedicated Network Warfare missions (embracing the core IO discipline of Computer Network Operations), Electronic Warfare, IO TT&P development, Red Teaming, and training. However, the Air Force has yet to establish an IO Squadron dedicated to influence operations, and is therefore

lacking a robust capability sorely needed in Joint PSYOP.

Solution

One proposed solution to these shortfalls is the creation of an Air Force Influence Operations Group, with dedicated information operations and Behavioral Influence Analysis missions, supporting PSYOP, Military Deception, OPSEC, Behavioral Influence Analysis, counterintelligence and counter-propaganda.

However, it may seem the height of unwarranted programmatic optimism to say that the USAF should field a “Total Force” Influence Operations Group (IFO Group) soonest, but the need is manifestly evident, even if the formal requirement is yet unstated. The proposed outlined is based on a set of rather compelling Air Force, Joint, and Interagency challenges, an operational force structure suggestion, and existing adversary persuasion/dissuasion capability deficiencies. The analysis concludes that opportunities to focus and apply unique air and space capabilities, Airmen’s experience, and intellectual and technical capacity to influencing adversary (and other’s) perceptions and behaviors, are “in our face.”

Aviation system resources, animated by USAF’s unmatched strategic and operational/campaign level planning and targeting competencies, offer the basis for unique USAF contributions to Joint and Interagency deterrence, dissuasion, shaping, stability and persuasion activities. Equally, these have great operational utility in irregular warfare, as well as in setting favorable conditions for possible future conventional, and “composite” (irregular and conventional) conflict prevention or prosecution, e.g. failing or failed states; unavowed hostile incursions; non-state actor challenges. The opportunities: re-engage in Joint force influence planning; facilitate AF Cyber Command’s involvement in applying effects to modify non-state threat actor behavior; and meet as yet unattended analysis, assessment, and planning responsibilities for Human Terrain characterization. These can

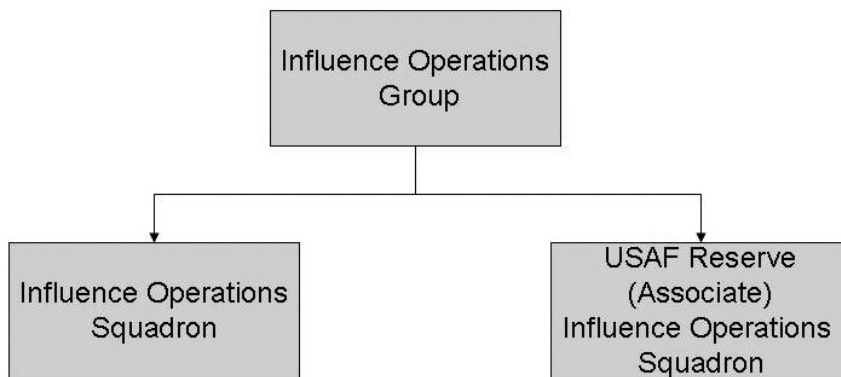


Figure 1. Proposed Air Force Influence Operations Group
(Authors)

set the stage for success in assistance missions, global influence competition, crisis, plus traditional conflict.

What capabilities might we best assemble and organize, and how would they be employed across the range of challenges (opportunities as well as threats), adversaries, and Joint planning and operations? Figure 1 outlines a two squadron IFO Group. The command and staff would be lean, featuring a functionally-oriented fifteen person A-staff structure, and a five person security office.

The Influence Operations Squadron

The IOS would have a maximum of 150 personnel, in two flights. The IFO Planning and Integration Flight would have core skill sets from PSYOP (12), military deception (6), OPSEC (4), targeting (6), JOPES and mission plans (16), and a modest—but essential—cyberspace/IO/CNO specialist component (8). The Behavioral Influences Assessment Flight would have the analytical, modeling/simulation, adversary assessment, measures of effectiveness (MOE), and database management and exploitation functions. Personnel would consist of all-source intelligence analysts (30), computational modelers (8), social/behavioral/cognitive sciences MOE developers (10), and database managers (6).

The 54 personnel in each Flight would have a lean management structure of (6) each. The remaining 30 personnel would be the squadron commander and

staff (12), a cadre for critical Service/Joint/other liaison (12), and security, programs and technical/SME contracting support (6).

The USAF Reserve Component (Reserve/Guard) Associate Squadron

With 150 Reserve, Guard, and Air Reserve Technician personnel, the functions of this “composite” squadron would include the (entire) Group’s Training and Qualification Flight, as a key element. IFO skill-specific trainers (20), training managers (5), and educational specialists (5) are also included. These specialists would perform IFO-specific Instructional Systems Development (ISD), outreach to Air Education and Training Command (AETC) and civilian academic communities on “best non-technical education and training practices.” They would further provide constant content updates for the disciplines represented:

behavioral/social/cognitive and decision sciences and regional; languages; and cultural familiarization studies. Mission-qualified personnel would be available from the USAF PSYOP flying organization, Commando Solo (5), and from AOC-qualified and experienced Reserve component personnel (5). The IFO Applications Flight is the high leverage feature of the Associate Squadron, providing or enabling field solutions, and effects-based approaches, to be tested and applied in joint exercises, experiments, and actual operational missions. The Applications Flight personnel profile would be made up of former or current pilots of A-10 [Thunderbolt II] (6), F-16 [Fighting Falcon] (8), and MH-60 [Pave Hawk] (4) aircraft, EC-130 [Commando Solo] mission crewmembers (6), plus Special Operations Low Level (SOLL) qualified navigators or pilots (6). Finally, CNO qualified (5) and combat communications (5) personnel complete the contingent.

Preliminary Concept of Operations: IFO SQ

Mission Rationale: the IFO Squadron is the adversary knowledge, assessment, and planning center of excellence for USAF IFO. The unique mix of skills will combine to deliver a service virtually absent in the current force, due to atrophy—or no previous operational level capability. This service is systematic, structured analysis of actual/potential adversaries and other human groups of interest, behavioral assessment/probabilistic forecasting of

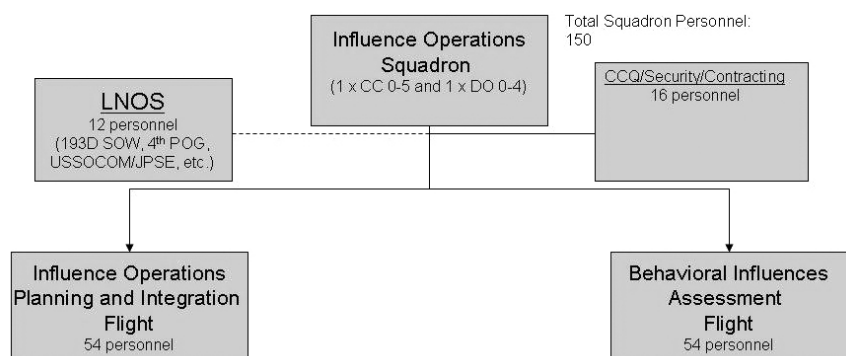


Figure 2. Proposed Air Force Influence Operations Squadron
(Authors)

likely intent, and the opponent's range of potential courses of action (ECOAs). The squadron's products and services will inform and advise any USAF planning and warfighting customer in two crucial areas: 1) If the USAF (or Joint force) did "nothing," what would the adversary see as opportunities to act in a given (plan or no-plan based) context and situation; and 2) If the same force acted to deter, dissuade, prevent, or induce, what would the adversary conclude to be his best available options? In other words, if we waited, what would he do; and if we were proactive, what would he perceive, assess, and decide to do? These are, of course, probabilistic estimates, yet there will often be high confidence levels associated with the assessments, based on SME input, open-source research, available (and tasked) intelligence collection, experienced professional judgment, and supporting modeling and simulation.

Tasking: Any USAF or Joint strategist, planner, targeteer or operator would have access to the squadron's services and products through the appropriate chain of command's operational and intelligence systems. A known, fully transparent tasking prioritization scheme would guide workloads to balance the squadron's capacities. Likely major customers are CHECKMATE [USAF strategic planning group], Air Staff A-9 [studies, analysis lessons learned], JFACC and AOC campaign planners/targeteers; counterinsurgency and foreign internal defense/security assistance planners; the IO and SOF communities; and AF Cyber Command.

Products would include reports on operational history, characteristics, and known adversary or other decision makers/processes/styles; individual and group/organizational behavioral profiles; and special assessments of those aviation capabilities/applications or actions—

both kinetic and non-kinetic. The bottom line is to provide the most likely courses of action, which if successfully executed, would result in the desired effects on perceptions, decision making, and behavior.

Preliminary Concept of Operations: Reserve Component Associate Squadron

Mission rationale for the Training and Qualification Flight (TQF) is to provide the advanced and continuing skills and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) for assigned personnel. This insures IFO task qualification, proficiency, and currency. It may be required to provide, or arrange for, initial skills acquisition by entry level or out-of-AFSC personnel. The focus is on applied skills and

enable engagement in the "perceptual battlespace" that envelops any geography—and all missions.

IFO Applications Flight tasking would follow the same routing as the IFO Squadron. Additionally, this Flight will have special relationships with the Air Warfare Center, the Coalition and Irregular Warfare Center, Air Force Special Operations Forces, and USAF security assistance (train, advise, assist) activities.

The Main Arguments for Establishing an IFO Group

Greatly increased USAF relevance in Irregular Warfare is driven by the challenges from non-state (sub-state, transnational, international organized crime, and hybrid) actors. Such challenges

are fundamentally those of ideas, ideals, ideologies, and information—the "Four Eye Competition." While kinetic means are required at times, success will hinge on the assessment of our combined Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) resolve, credibility,

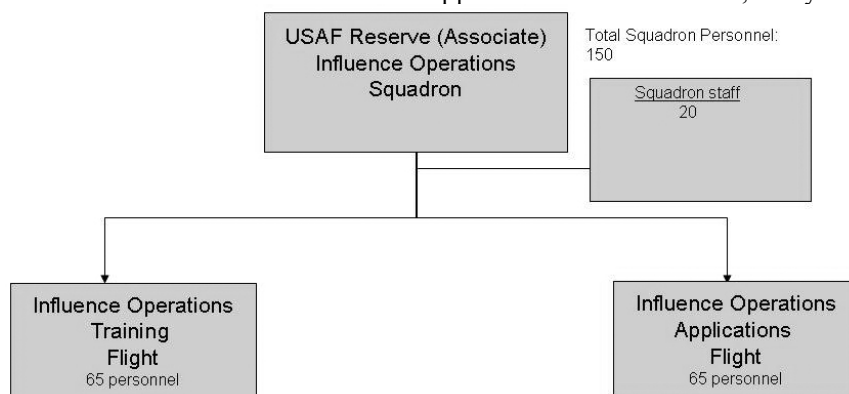


Figure 3. Proposed Reserve Air Force Influence Operations Squadron (Authors)

knowledge development strategies to be effective in IFO.

Mission Rationale for the IFO Applications Flight is use of planning, preliminary targeting, analyses, and IFO Squadron assessments as the basis for selecting and recommending kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities, mechanisms, platforms, plus skill sets to provide solutions to problems, and methods to exploit opportunities. This draws on the Reserve component's varied, and often "deeper" capabilities, operational experience, and unique skills. It develops field activity sets that meet customer requirements from Phases 0 through 5, and across the missions and tasks of air components, expeditionary forces, AOCs, JFACC planners, and Joint customers. The primary role is to

and effectiveness, and the *perceived* alignment of our words with our actions. Influence operations, correctly crafted, targeted, and applied works for us, and against adversaries, by making our values-based overarching purposes clear, and by discrediting our adversaries' false/unworthy values and inhumane actions. There are a wide, often-exercised, range of perceptual and psychological effects that aviation routinely applies—from air, space, and cyberspace. However, to have the desired mission outcome or desired campaign end-state, we must affect the behavior of others. Actions taken without assessment of the intended and other effects on the adversary, are often counter-productive, and lead to a lack of confidence in USAF capacity to deter, dissuade, persuade, or induce desired

behaviors. We can greatly increase confidence in achieving the desired short, mid, and long term effects, if we know the adversary well, and perform axiological (or adversary values-based) targeting. We must then take actions that credibly hold at risk that which our adversary most values and needs.

IFO is, at a minimum, a Joint set of objectives, plans, and related activities. It is frequently an Interagency and Coalition effort, and often a campaign in its own right. Demonstrations, warnings, suggestions, and kinetic activities must be designed to affect the perceptions and the decision calculus of adversaries, in a manner, at a tempo, and over time (e.g., deterrence), in a planned approach that supports and delivers the effects a JFC

requires to achieve objectives. If we fail to know enough about what will and will not “work,” and if we act on preference and habit rather than probability, we may occasionally succeed by accident. More often we will be suboptimal, or fail.

Conclusion

The range, speed, lethality, precision, global situational awareness, and flexibility of airpower—with the enablers from space and cyberspace—are essential elements of influence operations. They are not found elsewhere in DOD by type, capacity, or comparable effectiveness. The psychological effects of aviation are well documented, and they are the USAF’s responsibility to organize, plan, and apply through effects

-based approaches. Influence Operations define the center of the effects-based approach paradigm: changing systems and behaviors in advantageous ways.

The Influence Operations Group would solve a number of USAF PSYOP shortfalls. First, it would provide the necessary expertise both in operational planning and targeting to support both Air Force Influence Operations at the Air and Space Operations Centers. Second, it would provide Joint PSYOP a cadre of trained planners, to supplement Army PSYOP planners serving in a JPOTF or in the 4th PSYOP Group. This will be a true value-added capability for Joint PSYOP and Joint IO—one that has been sorely lacking. For the US Air Force, it is the right thing to do. 